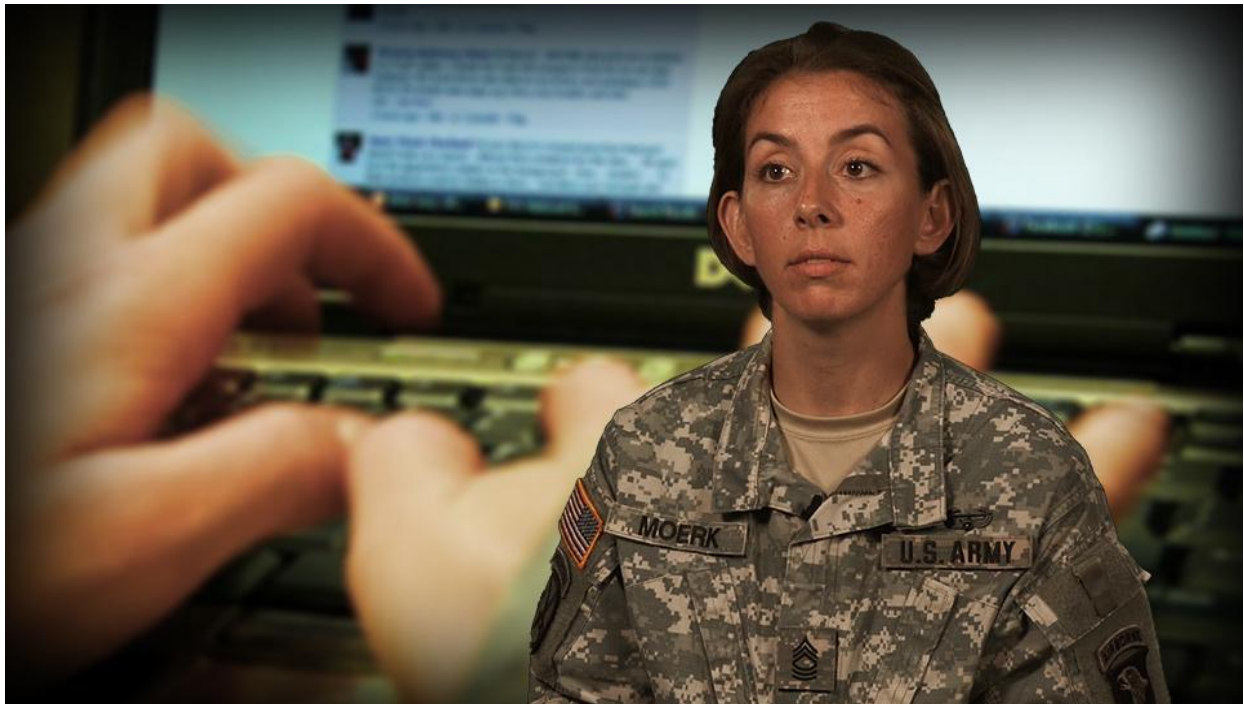


# Confronting Unethical Conduct On Social Media



## **CASE STUDY VIDEO VIGNETTE: DISCUSSION GUIDE**

For all members of the Army Profession  
[cape.army.mil](http://cape.army.mil)

# Confronting Unethical Conduct on Social Media

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## BASIC CONCEPTS

- ☐ Watch the video and read the transcript prior to discussion.
- ☐ Review “Facilitation Best Practices.”
- ☐ See “Additional Resources” for more content.
- ☐ Think about a personal experience, story, or event that relates to the scenario and consider using this as a way to start the discussion.
- ☐ Present each part of the vignette and lead an open discussion that relates to desired learning outcomes. Listed below are “Sample Discussion Questions” to assist in facilitating the class.
- ☐ After watching and discussing each part of the story, identify the takeaways and discuss how each participant will apply this experience.

## FACILITATION: BEST PRACTICES

The facilitator’s main role is to be a catalyst for conversation and learning about the topic at-hand. This video case study contains several rounds of discussion and ends with time to reflect on personal stories and vignettes that relate to the video.

Here are some key points to consider when preparing to facilitate a discussion:

- ☐ Let participants do most of the talking.
- ☐ The facilitator’s key role is to ask questions that spark thought and conversation.
- ☐ Ensure you engage everyone within your group and set the conditions for them to share thoughts openly. Do not let any one person or group of people dominate the conversation. Ask questions/opinions of the “quiet ones” to bring them into the group discussion.
- ☐ Have questions prepared for each round to drive the conversation. Ask open-ended questions and encourage participants to elaborate on their answers/thoughts.

**You are the catalyst for conversation. Make sure you continue to ask questions that make your group dig deeper.** For more information and guidelines on facilitating professional development discussions, visit the CAPE Website at <http://cape.army.mil>.

### **Introduction**

The Army recognizes that social media gives people the ability to communicate with larger audiences faster and in new ways. The Army also understands the risks associated with social media.

Three Soldiers posted a video on YouTube that depicted life in the barracks. It was then posted to a popular FaceBook page for greater exposure. MSG Katrina Moerk confronted the Soldiers who produced this video as well as those who made unprofessional statements in the comment section of this FaceBook post.

She is sharing her story because she wants all Army Professionals to know that there are no split personalities in social media.

### **Social Media and Today's Army Professional**

More so than it has been ever before, social media plays a huge part in the military. FRGs have FaceBook pages; units have FaceBook pages. Some in the Army have Twitter. It's just, it's a different way of keeping in touch, information's more readily accessible.

There was a video clip meant to be a satire of barracks life for young, single Soldiers, and it was posted originally onto YouTube and it was shared onto a community page that I follow. And within the first minute and a half, it depicts three Soldiers standing outside of what is supposed to be a female Soldier's room and they're commenting to the new kid as he's getting his tour through the barracks, welcome to your first Army unit, about how it's their next in turn – that's their chick, their piece of meat, their – and the new kid looking kind of confused at his new roommate and tour guide.

The tour guide explains, "Oh, that's Susie Rottencrotch." And I stop right there. I was

absolutely appalled and disgusted that this is what would be portrayed to the Army to prospects, to future Soldiers, to current Soldiers, to other nations. It's on YouTube. We've got the barracks whore, Susie Rottencrotch. Who doesn't have one of those? And I think I was the first person to comment on the page that I was kind of disgusted. I couldn't get past the gang-bang line outside of this girl's room. It was just ... I was appalled. And within seconds, I had comments from not to the community page, not to the video of the original post, replying directly at me. I must've been – I must be that girl, implying that I'm Susie Rottencrotch in the barracks. I need to not take offense.

We all know that every branch, every barracks has one. I'm just a butt-hurt female. I'm the reason that females should not be allowed in the military. We take the fun out of everything. I tried to explain diplomatically, if you don't know who you're talking to in an open and public forum, you need to be careful what you say. These were individuals that were in uniform in their FaceBook pages. I know they're service members.

### **Stewardship of the Army Profession**

And I sat down and I paced my house. I was furious and I knew that they were service members. And using social media was not – replying in the venue in which this conversation started was not – they weren't getting it. So I sat down and I looked them up in Global. I found their professional, their work email accounts and I sat down and I started typing. I was just absolutely a ball of emotion. And I sat and I paced and I paced my house probably for about three hours. And I sat down and finally I

was just, this is not you personally; this is where there's a failure somewhere that you don't make this connection that I'm making.

You need more training. That you think it's OK on an open and public forum to call someone that you don't know, you don't know my background, you don't know who I am, all of these horrible names to insinuate and put out in the World Wide Web that you think I'm Susie Rottencrotch in the barracks. That I am, as a senior non-commissioned officer, the reason females should not be allowed in the military because I'm offended by this. That it is an assumption to make on my part, but I put out you're male Soldiers in the Army.

It's more than likely that you have never been isolated, you've never been stalked, you've never been sexually assaulted, you've never been humiliated publicly for being a victim and you probably never will. You don't understand what your actions are.

Two of the folks that commented were NCOs. I found out later that one of them was a SHARP rep. This is someone that is trained and certified to teach what we're trying what is wrong with the culture and be a force and someone to help move this change in our culture. And I was just, I was appalled. I don't – I can't say I'm the most perfect NCO, but I take my profession very seriously. I take my integrity, what I say is what I'll do. If I give my word to something, I would do everything that I can; I'll make myself sick to carry out my word.

And this is a staff sergeant leading Soldiers. One of the Soldiers actually replied back that he wanted to file an EO complaint for my generalization in implying that as males they'd probably never be sexually assaulted. I gave him my contact – full contact info and highly invited that his command reach out and I would love to discuss this. I didn't hear from him again. But as I'm sitting there, I wanted, I didn't want it to, I wanted them to understand that this is what's

wrong with the culture. This is what needs to be changed.

## **Ethical Compartmentalization – Does Your Private Life Matter?**

When you get into social media and everyone jokes about Internet trolls and there's a disconnect 'cause it happened on the Internet, it didn't really happen. I typed it; I didn't actually say it. I wouldn't stand in front of a platoon of females and call them dirty nasty names, but it's OK to do it on the Internet. I wouldn't – whatever my personal opinions are of different fellow service members' leadership, civilian or military – I wouldn't call them out in a formation in a public forum in an open venue and call them dirty nasty names, but it's OK on the Internet.

And this is not, and it's what needs to change. And I figured who better to help them improve their unit's training program, an ICC, the director of the Army SHARP Program.

## **It Was Just an On-the-Spot Correction – Virtually**

The Soldiers that I work with on a day-to-day basis are some of the best I've met in my career. I have amazing leadership that has provided me a lot of mentorships, especially the last couple of months. It's – the reaction and how things were handled, I wasn't expecting – I was expecting them to sit down with these Soldiers and say, "You need a little retraining. Let's relook this."

Because I know – in my unit, we get social media in PEO classes – that this is not acceptable. We know that you can't make these comments to other coworkers, your brothers- and sisters-in-arms, in person. You can't do it over the phone. You can't do it in the barracks. So what are these units not putting two and

two together? I was expecting just "Hey, you messed up. Let's get you a little retraining. Let's improve this. Maybe we're not giving this the right kind of emphasis." I was not expecting this. I was not – yes. Well, I'm more humbled. I'm not going to lie. I was not expecting the ripple effect to go the way that it has.

I just, for me it was I'm going to sit – this, it's an on the spot correction. And I could not do it in person. I did it the most professional way that I could, which is to reach out to them and say, "Hey, this is where you were wrong. This is who I am. I'm explaining to you why you were wrong. This is what you need to do to correct yourself." It's what any NCO should be doing.

## **Serving Honorably 24/7**

I have on my signature block, it's the measure of a man's real character is what he would do if he knew no one would ever find out. If you can't look at yourself every day in the mirror and know that you did right, morally, ethically, that your character is clean, your integrity is beyond reproach, that you are leading by example, the right example, for your Soldiers, you need to find a new job. You need to find another line of profession. This is not the right field for you.

The Army – I joke about the Army – the Army's easy. They'll give you the color-coordinated, your uniforms. You just show up on time, you do what needs to be done with amazing training, amazing travel packages, and opportunities.

But we're held to a higher standard. We are. We are serving our country. The United States expects a lot more from her military.

We hold higher standards because we need to entrust the service members that we've enlisted who have volunteered for this that they're going to do right – that they're going to do right in some dark corner, some dark place.

When no one else is there, they're going to know what's right and they're going to do it. They don't need – they shouldn't need a spotlight on them. They shouldn't need someone to hold their hands and say, "This is wrong." They should do right.

We have a lot of dirty secrets and skeletons in our closet. We need to start cleaning out the closet. The Army's done that with this program. A lot of my family gets upset when the numbers go up. They're more reports and I'm trying to explain that that's because we have a better system in place to allow help.

Units are doing right by victims, they're helping them. They're getting them the support that's needed. We're not putting them in a dark corner, in a dark closet. If you're not ready to get the skeletons out of the closet, the great Soldiers, the amazing Soldiers that are getting caught with drugs in their system, that are doing the DUIs, drunk on duty, beating their spouses – they're not great Soldiers. They could've been amazing downrange. They could've been amazing in garrison, amazing troop-leading and mentoring. But at the end of the day, if that integrity, that character and that commitment to upholding the values is not there, they're not a great Soldier. It's 24/7.

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Social media provides the opportunity for us to speak freely about our activities and interests. However, as Army Professionals we are expected to live up to a higher moral-ethical standard, to adhere to and uphold the Army Values and Army Ethic – both on and off duty. This includes respecting the dignity and worth of all people, especially fellow Soldiers.


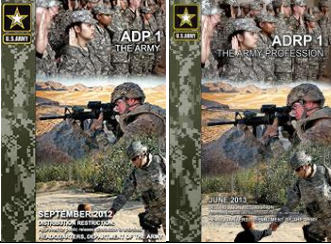
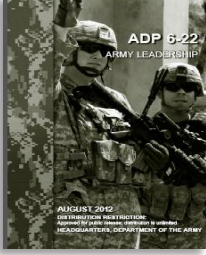
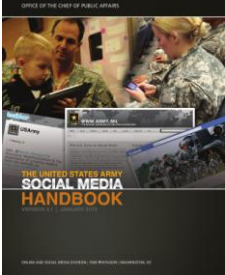
The conduct of all Soldiers is not only expected to meet the moral standards of ethical conduct, but also is subject to the Uniform Code

of Military Justice at all times, including during participation in social media. It is important that all Army Professionals know that once they log on to a social media platform, they still represent the Army and they must conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the Army Ethic and worthy of their professional status.

**The Army Profession demands that every Soldier, Army Civilian, and Family Member “Stand Strong” by taking personal responsibility for their own behavior, for confronting unacceptable conduct, and for resolving any incident that demeans an individual’s dignity and respect.**

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The following resources are available:

	<p><b><u>Center for the Army Profession and Ethic:</u></b></p> <p>Visit the CAPE Website:  <a href="http://cape.army.mil">http://cape.army.mil</a></p> <p>Stand Strong Webpage:  <a href="http://cape.army.mil/aaop/stand-strong/">http://cape.army.mil/aaop/stand-strong/</a></p>
	<p><b><u>ADP 1 The Army &amp; ADRP 1 The Army Profession:</u></b></p> <p><a href="http://armypubs.army.mil/doctrine/DR_pubs/DR_a/pdf/adp1.pdf">http://armypubs.army.mil/doctrine/DR_pubs/DR_a/pdf/adp1.pdf</a>  <a href="http://armypubs.army.mil/doctrine/DR_pubs/dr_a/pdf/adrp1.pdf">http://armypubs.army.mil/doctrine/DR_pubs/dr_a/pdf/adrp1.pdf</a></p>
	<p><b><u>ADP 6-22 Army Leadership:</u></b></p> <p><a href="http://armypubs.army.mil/doctrine/DR_pubs/dr_a/pdf/adp6_22_new.pdf">http://armypubs.army.mil/doctrine/DR_pubs/dr_a/pdf/adp6_22_new.pdf</a></p>
	<p><b><u>U.S. Army Social Media Handbook:</u></b></p> <p><a href="http://www.slideshare.net/USArmySocialMedia/social-media-handbook-2013">www.slideshare.net/USArmySocialMedia/social-media-handbook-2013</a></p>

## **SAMPLE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

### **“Social Media and Today’s Army Professional”**

**[Watch this segment – 1:07 to 3:27]**

How did these Soldiers violate the Army Values?

Does unethical behavior have a greater impact when it is posted to a public site? Why or why not? What potential damage can it cause?

How are you as an Army Professional expected to conduct yourself when participating in social media?

What are some examples of how you can demonstrate character, competence, and commitment when taking part in social media activities?

### **“Stewardship of the Army Profession”**

**[Watch this segment – 3:27 to 6:38]**

Why do you think MSG Moerk involved herself in this situation?

What requires Army Professionals to make corrections when they see a deficiency?

What might have happened if MSG Moerk did not take action to correct this situation?

What would ignoring it say about her character as an Army Professional?

Were MSG Moerk’s actions consistent with the Army Ethic? Why or why not?

How did she display her commitment to the Army Profession?

What would you do in this situation?

### **“Ethical Compartmentalization – Does Your Private Life Matter?”**

**[Watch this segment – 6:38 to 7:36]**

Are there different standards between on-duty and off-duty time? Why do some Soldiers think that the Army Ethic and Values no longer apply when they take off their uniforms and are on personal time? Does our standard of professional conduct apply only on a military installation during duty hours?

What are some of the factors you should consider before participating in social media?

How can you apply ethical decision-making to this situation?

Can inappropriate attitudes between members of a group or unit negatively affect the organizational climate? Explain. How can this affect morale and Esprit de Corps?

### **“It Was Just an On-the-Spot Correction – Virtually”**

**[Watch this segment – 7:36 to 9:31]**

Did MSG Moerk overreact by reporting the incident to the SHARP director? Would an “on-the-spot” correction have been enough to address the ethical violations?

Why is it important for Army Professionals to stand up against violations of the Army Ethic, making corrections and/or reporting as necessary?

Could this incident be an indication of a much broader problem? Could command climate have played a role in the ethical violations?

### **“Serving Honorably 24/7”**

**[Watch this segment – 9:31 to 12:15]**

Why are Army Professionals held to a higher ethical and moral standard?

What does MSG Moerk mean when she says, “[Soldiers] should not need a spotlight on them ... to do right?”

For the Army to be a Profession there must be Trust in its relationship with the American people. How can Army Professionals demonstrate the Character, Competence, and Commitment at all times that contribute to building Trust with the American public?

## AAR/CHECK ON LEARNING

### Personal Vignettes and Takeaways

*Facilitator asks students to share any personal vignettes and takeaways from the module.*

**It is important for the group to relate to this story on a personal level. Conclude the module emphasizing the significance of MSG Moerk's experience. Soldiers and Army Civilians should walk away with a better understanding of the Army life and be able to convey the importance of the Army Profession to others.**

**The following questions can help determine learning and promote reflection:**

<b>Learning</b>	Q – What did you learn from listening to the reactions and reflections of others?  Q – What are the future implications of this information and / or experience?
<b>Reflection</b>	Q – How do you feel / what do you think about what you learned?  Q – What will you do with your new information?  Q – How can you apply this experience to better develop yourself and your fellow professionals?